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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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REF: A. STATE 23310
B. STATE 29378

1. QUESTION OF FORMAL ELECTION OBSERVERS GROUP DRAWN FROM DIPLOMATIC CORPS HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH DO. HE MADE IT CLEAR HE PREFERS GVN EXTEND ITS INVITATIONS ON A BILATERAL BASIS TO INDIVIDUAL MISSIONS REPRESENTED ON EITHER RESIDENT OR NON-RESIDENT BASIS. HOWEVER, HE ALSO AGREED TO SEND A NOTE OF GENERAL INVITATION TO DEAN OF CORPS, NOTIFYING HIM OFFICIALLY OF ELECTIONS AND INVITING OBSERVATION IN GENERAL TERMS.

2. SUGGESTION OF DO CITED PARAGRAPH 2 REFERENCE A

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY ___ DATE ___
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

DID NOT IMPLY DESIRE TO FORMALIZE DIPLOMATIC OBSERVER TEAM. IF TEAM WERE TO BE INVITED WITH INDICATION THAT "GVN WOULD WELCOME ANY OBJECTIVE COMMENTS THAT OBSERVER COMMITTEE MAY CARE TO MAKE" (PARAGRAPH 2 REFERENCE A) IT WOULD MEAN THAT DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE IN REMARKABLE POSITION OF COMMENTING ON ELECTION PROCESS IN COUNTRY TO WHICH THEY ARE ACCREDITED. WE SENSE DO IS WELL AWARE OF THIS AND HAS POLITELY MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE.

3. IN ADDITION TO BILATERAL INVITATIONS TO MISSIONS, DO SPOKE OF HIS INTENTION TO MAKE A MORE GENERAL STATEMENT THROUGH OFFICIAL VIETNAM PRESS, IN WHICH HE WOULD STATE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS IN REGARD TO ELECTIONS AND INVITE ANY INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS TO OBSERVE THE PROCESS.

AUTHENTICATED BY RSR

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A. WE HAVE DISCUSSED OBSERVER QUESTION WITH [redacted] ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS. WE ALSO TOLD HIM OF OUR SUGGESTION FOR A DIPLOMATIC OBSERVER TEAM. HE EXPRESSED STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF PROPOSAL.

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 3827 C O N F I D E N T I A L
SAID [redacted] RECOGNIZE AND AGREE WITH IMPORTANCE OF GENERATING FAVORABLE IMPRESSION BUT BELIEVE MASSIVE PRESS REPRESENTATION AND NORMAL DIPLOMATIC OBSERVATION IS SUFFICIENT. HE SAID [redacted] HAD INFORMED [redacted] IT CONSIDERED PROPOSAL FOR FORMAL OBSERVATION BY THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AS A GROUP WAS INAPPROPRIATE. ADDED THAT STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENTS FOLLOWING ELECTIONS ON BASIS OF INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATION IS MORE LIKELY TO ACHIEVE DESIRED IMPACT.

GP-4. LODGE

ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O 8/18/66, 4:55 A.M.
PASSED WHITE HOUSE, DOD, CIA, USIA, NSA 8/18/66, 4:55 A.M.

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